

Environment Grants

2026 – 2027 Guidelines



Acknowledgement of the Traditional Custodians

Banyule City Council is proud to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as Traditional Custodians of the land and we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and emerging, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history.

Diversity Statement

Our community is made up of diverse cultures, beliefs, abilities, bodies, sexualities, ages and genders. We are committed to access, equity, participation and rights for everyone; principles which empower, foster harmony, and increase the wellbeing of an inclusive community.

Banyule City Council is committed to access, equity and inclusion in the delivery of our grant programs. We encourage all applicants to consider the following when developing and implementing their project:

- A commitment to embracing gender equity in its policies, programs and practices. With a focus striving for gender equality and promoting equality of opportunity, rights and resources for women, men and gender-diverse people.
- A commitment to access, equity and inclusion for all members of our diverse community in the delivery of program(s) and/or event(s), including people living with disability (including neurodiversity), people who identify as LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, people experiencing financial disadvantage (including people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness) and our multicultural and multi-faith communities.

Additional Support for Applicants

Banyule City Council is committed to our grants process being open and accessible to everyone. To this end we would like to offer the following access options.

Accessibility

Please contact us on **9457 9831** or **gemma.watson@banyule.vic.gov.au** if you would like any of the following:

- If you need a printed copy of these guidelines or a printed copy in large print
- If you need to discuss these guidelines by phone
- If you need to discuss these guidelines with us using the services of an Auslan interpreter
- If you need a printed copy of the application form for reference purposes (all applications need to be submitted online through the SmartyGrants system)
- If you need assistance to enter information into SmartyGrants due to access issues or you have difficulty using technology.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, you can contact us through the **National Relay Service** on **133 677 (TTY)** or **1300 555 727** and ask for **9457 9955**.

Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Applicants

If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and would like to discuss the grants program with a member of Banyule City Council's First Nations team, please contact Zali Mifsud at zali.mifsud@banyule.vic.gov.au or 9242 3491

Support for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Applicants

If you need a language interpreter please contact TIS National on 131 450 and ask to be connected to us on 8673 4371.

If you face any barriers to applying and would like to discuss these or any other ways we can help you, please contact us at **gemma.watson@banyule.vic.gov.au** or **9457 9831**.

Purpose

Council is committed to delivering the Banyule Community Vision 2041 where Banyule is a thriving, sustainable, inclusive and connected community, where community members are engaged and feel they belong and where our environment is valued and protected.

This is achieved through partnering with local community groups, organisations and individuals to support the delivery of community-based services, programs, projects and events that involve and benefit the community of Banyule. One of the ways Council supports these initiatives is through the Banyule Grants Program, which is designed to strengthen and support the building of community capacity.

Our Sustainable Environment

The Environment Grants Program supports local individuals, community groups and organisations to deliver projects that benefit both the environment and the community in Banyule.

These grants support the environmental goals outlined in the **Banyule Plan 2025–2029** and align with **Priority Theme 2: Our Sustainable Environment:**

"A progressive and innovative leader in protecting, enhancing and increasing the health and diversity of our natural environment, where we all commit to playing an active role in achieving environmental sustainability and reducing waste and carbon emissions."

The Environment Grants Program supports projects that contribute to the vision outlined in **Priority Theme 2: Our Sustainable Environment**. Projects must contribute to one or more elements of this vision, including:

- Aboriginal culture and Caring for Country principles guide our sustainability efforts.
- Council partners with the community, education and private sectors, investing in solutions to tackle climate change.
- Population growth aligns with sustainability goals, ensuring equal access to natural spaces.
- We are empowered, adaptive, proactive and resilient to climate change.
- Council promotes sustainable transport options and is on the way to being carbon negative, with a circular economy achieving zero waste.
- We are well-informed on waste, food security and climate actions, and Council leads environmental education.
- We protect and strengthen biodiversity, reduce species extinction and enhance wildlife corridors and urban vegetation, including managing pets and pests.
- Urban farming and home-grown food practices are supported and encouraged to be the norm.
- Trees, green spaces and the urban forest are abundant and maintained to enhance liveability and neighbourhood character.
- Environmentally sustainable design is central to planning and development, and the use of renewable energy in our homes, businesses and facilities is normal.

To help align your project with this priority area, please refer to the **Focus of Grants section below.**

Focus of Grants

Projects must contribute to one or more of the following environmental focus areas. The examples below are provided as a guide only. Projects will vary depending on whether you are applying as a community group, organisation, school, preschool or individual applicant.

Please note: The Sustainable Transport focus area identified in Priority Theme 2: Our Sustainable Environment of the Banyule Plan is not included in this Environment Grants round. A separate Sustainable Transport Grants round is planned for the end of 2026.

Vision	Focus Area	Description	Example of Community Projects	Example of School & Preschool Projects
Aboriginal culture and Caring for Country principles guide our sustainability efforts	Caring for Country	Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, leadership and connection to Country.	Cultural land management activities, knowledge sharing, cultural education projects, or working with Traditional Owner organisations such as the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to provide cultural advice, cultural education, on-Country learning experiences or guidance on Caring for Country initiatives.	First Nations-led incursions or excursions, Indigenous planting projects, Caring for Country programs.
We are empowered, adaptive, proactive and resilient to climate change. Council partners with the community, education and private sectors, investing in solutions to tackle climate change.	Climate Action – Climate mitigation and/or adaptation	Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and/or helping communities adapt to climate change.	Creating a community climate resilience group or network, Community-led climate resilience projects, Neighbourhood preparedness initiatives for heatwaves and extreme weather, cooling, shade or urban heat mitigation projects.	Student climate leadership programs, shade projects, climate resilience education.
Council promotes sustainable transport options and is on the way	Waste Reduction &	Preventing waste, reducing consumption	Repair cafés, tool libraries, community composting.	Waste audits, composting systems, recycling

to being carbon negative, with a circular economy achieving zero waste.	Circular Economy	and keeping materials, products and resources in use for as long as possible through reuse, repair, sharing, recycling and regeneration.		initiatives, litter reduction campaigns.
We are well-informed on waste, food security and climate actions, and Council leads environmental education	Environmental Education	Building environmental knowledge, skills and stewardship.	Workshops, citizen science projects, educational events and resources.	Sustainability and environmental learning projects, environmental clubs, outdoor learning programs.
We protect and strengthen biodiversity, reduce species extinction and enhance wildlife corridors and urban vegetation, including managing pets and pests	Biodiversity	Protecting and enhancing local plants, wildlife and ecosystems.	Habitat restoration, revegetation projects, wildlife monitoring, nest box projects, indigenous planting days.	Frog bogs, pollinator gardens, habitat gardens, biodiversity education projects.
Urban farming and home-grown food practices are supported and encouraged to be the norm	Urban Food	Supporting sustainable local food production, food growing skills and sustainable food systems.	Creating or supporting community gardens, urban farming projects and food-growing workshops and initiatives.	Kitchen gardens, food-growing programs, seed saving projects.
Trees, green spaces and the urban forest are abundant and maintained to enhance liveability and neighbourhood character.	Urban Greening	Increasing tree canopy, vegetation and green spaces.	Community planting projects, urban cooling initiatives.	Tree planting, shade creation, greening school grounds.
Environmentally sustainable design is central to planning and development, and the use of renewable energy in our homes, businesses and facilities is normal.	Renewable Energy	Supporting the transition to clean energy.	Solar panels for community groups, renewable energy education projects, clean energy expos.	Solar installations, energy monitoring projects, renewable energy education.

Key Dates

Grant round opens	Monday 20 July 2026
Grant round closes	Sunday 30 August 2026
Initial contact with Council Officer	No later than Friday 14 August 2026
Checklist completed with Council officer	No later than Friday 21 August 2026
Applicants advised of outcome	Within 3 months of grant round closing date
Presentation event	Wednesday 25 November 2026
Acquittal date	Within 12 months of notification of outcome

Environment Grant Pool & Grant Categories

Council's Environment Grant pool of **\$90,000** is available to support local individuals, community groups, organisations, schools and preschools to deliver projects that benefit both the environment and the community in Banyule. Applicants can apply for grants of up to **\$10,000**.

There are two grant categories for the 2026 - 2027 funding round:

Community Environmental Projects - up to \$10,000

Available to support local individuals and groups to deliver projects that benefit both the environment and the community in Banyule.

Schools and Preschools - up to \$10,000

Available to support schools and preschools to deliver projects that benefit both the environment and the school community in Banyule.

The Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Environment Grants Program also supports the **Healthy Planet, Healthy People** priority within Banyule's Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Connecting with, caring for and protecting the natural environment can have positive impacts on health, wellbeing and community resilience while also helping to achieve environmental outcomes.

Banyule Council is required to support the health and wellbeing of the community through a Health and Wellbeing Plan, which is integrated into the Banyule Plan to support a coordinated approach to improving health, wellbeing and sustainability outcomes.

Projects are **not required** to align with this priority. However, applicants may wish to consider how their project could contribute to:

- Caring for Country principles.
- Enhancing biodiversity and protecting green, blue and open spaces.
- Encouraging people to connect with and care for nature.
- Promoting eco-wise practices and climate action.
- Strengthening community resilience to climate change and extreme weather.

For example: A revegetation project may improve biodiversity while also creating opportunities for people to connect with nature, incorporate Caring for Country principles, learn new skills, build social connections, enhance wellbeing and contribute to caring for their local environment.

Projects that demonstrate both environmental and community wellbeing outcomes may strengthen an application but are not required for funding.

Eligibility Criteria

Who is not eligible to apply

- Local, State or Federal Government agencies or departments excluding schools.
- Groups that promote gambling, receive income from gambling, have gambling facilities on site, or deliver activities from gambling venues (refer to the Gambling Harm Prevention Policy 2024–2028 for more information on Council's position). Commemorative activities of recognised community significance (e.g. ANZAC/Remembrance/Vietnam Veterans Day ceremonies) may be considered for funding where they are clearly separated from any gambling operations and delivered independently of gambling facilities.
- Political organisations.
- Groups seeking direct support from Councillors in their application.
- Groups with outstanding grant acquittals. All previous grants from Banyule Council where the acquittal is due prior to the closing of the grant round you are applying to, must be acquitted to a satisfactory standard. Unacquitted or insufficiently/unsatisfactorily acquitted grants will deem the application ineligible.
- Groups with outstanding debt to Council.
- Groups operating with a deficit.

Group Applicants must

Applicants must satisfy one of the following requirements to be eligible for a Community Grant.

Applicants must be:

- an incorporated association
- an auspiced not for profit community group
- a Public Company limited by guarantee (not-for-profit) or a Charity or Benevolent Trust

Applicants also need to:

- have a formal structure including office bearers and a bank account
- provide support, programs or services to Banyule residents. Where the applicant is located. outside municipal borders, Banyule residents must be the major beneficiaries.
- have been established and operational for a minimum of 12 months.
- provide an ABN or an auspice ABN or be willing to complete a "Statement by Supplier".
- hold Public Liability Insurance up to \$20,000,000 at the time of commencement and throughout the project.
- supply copies of financial statements for the group.
- Demonstrate compliance with all Victorian Child Safe Standards -
- <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/new-child-safe-standards-now-apply/>

Please note: Kindergarten services managed by an Early Years Manager (EYM) must seek permission for the proposed project from the EYM prior to making a grant application to Council.

Individual Applicants must

- Be auspiced (auspicing fees can be included as a funded element for individual applicants).
- Be at least 18 years old.
- Work, live or provide significant evidence of practice in the Banyule community.
- Hold Public Liability Insurance up to \$10,000,000 at the time of project commencement and throughout the project. If you are covered under your Auspice Body's Insurance, please include a letter from the Auspice Body stating this.

What won't be funded

- Programs or services that do not align with Councils vision and priorities - see the Council plan here <https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/About-us/Policies-plans-strategies/Council-Plan-and-Budget>
- Religious or faith-based activities, except where the primary purpose is to promote interfaith understanding, community education, or social cohesion. Activities will not be funded if they primarily involve religious worship, instruction, or proselytizing, and must be open to participation from the broader community
- Political or lobbying activities
- Gambling activities
- Primary health or medical care

- Core education or curricula activities
- Projects which intend to gift, sponsor or grant the money to another person or entity
- Equipment that does not remain the property of the applicant.
- Recurrent operational expenses including costs associated with the usual business of an organisation (e.g. salaries, insurance, electricity, rates, telephone, rent)
- Recurrent core equipment that an organisation could be reasonably expected to budget for (e.g. balls for a sporting club) unless a strong case is made regarding the applicant's financial need.
- Projects on government/Council owned land, parks and open space unless there is a license agreement in place with the applicant.
- Requests for gas appliances.
- Planning and permit expenses e.g. master plans, landscape plans, building permits.
- Project management or auspicings fees.
- Requests that are the responsibility of another funding body or level of government.
- Uniforms provided to individuals. Requests for uniforms such as clash jumpers, training vests, netball bibs will be considered provided they remain in the possession of the group/club.
- Applications seeking retrospective funding.
- Projects where the applicant has received full funding for the same purpose from another source.
- Payments to professional grant writers.
- Defibrillators will not be funded if there is public access to a defibrillator in close proximity (within 400 metres) to the applicant's place of operation. Grant applicants seeking funding for a defibrillator must agree to register it with Ambulance Victoria <https://registermyaed.ambulance.vic.gov.au/>
- CCTV will not be funded due to privacy issues.

Multiple Applications

Both individual and group applicants may apply for only one category in the 2026 - 2027 Environment Grants round.

Environment Grant applicants are eligible to apply in other Banyule Council grant streams.

Organisations that are auspicings an application are eligible to apply for their own projects.

Organisations may auspicings more than one application.

General Conditions

- Planting projects must:
 - Use indigenous plants of local provenance. See the species list in Appendix 2. For a more detailed species list and guidance, please contact Banyule Council's Biodiversity Team.
 - Include an overview of site considerations, preparation and ongoing maintenance in the application.
- Council approval (including necessary permits) must be gained for any projects being undertaken on Council owned or managed land prior to application. For other Environment Grants applicants may be required to gain approval from a Council Coordinator or Manager and provide evidence in writing that they have done so.

- Applications for projects on private land may be considered but must fulfil the assessment criteria and demonstrate benefit to the wider community, or positive impacts to public land.
- Applications for projects on land owned by other entities, including schools, must have confirmed land manager approval prior to application.
 - For planting projects on school grounds, applicants must demonstrate support from the school and relevant facilities, grounds or maintenance staff. Applications must include consideration of site preparation, ongoing maintenance, watering requirements and plant survival, particularly during school holiday periods and periods of extreme heat.
- Applicants must disclose any other funding sources being sought for the project. Where a project is reliant on funding from another source, any grant offer may be made conditional on that funding being secured. If funding has not been secured prior to the application closing date, applicants must provide details of the funding source and the expected date they will be notified of the outcome.

Application Process

Grant applications are made online by completing an application form on the SmartyGrants platform. There are separate links to SmartyGrants for each Banyule Grants Program funding round.

Visit www.banyule.smartygrants.com.au to view the current grant rounds and guidelines.

If you do not have an account set up with SmartyGrants you will need to register. To do this you will have to provide an email address and create a password. Please use the email address for the group you are applying on behalf of, not a personal email.

If you have an existing SmartyGrants account, please use the same email and password. If you have forgotten your password, please click on "forgotten password" and a link to create a new password will be sent to your email address. Please register for SmartyGrants and open a new application as soon as possible. This way you will receive communications and reminders from Council which are sent out to all active applicants. You can save and return to your application at any time prior to submission.

Once submitted, applicants can request to have their application reopened to update or submit further information if the request is made prior to the grant round closing date. Once the grant round closes, no further changes are possible. All requested documentation in support of the application needs to be submitted with your application on SmartyGrants. Council staff are unable to attach this information for you.

The online system does not accept incomplete applications. All fields marked with an * must be completed.

Applicants will receive an email from SmartyGrants with a copy of the completed application attached once the application has been successfully submitted.

More information about submitting an application through SmartyGrants can be found here:

<https://applicanthelp.smartygrants.com.au/help-guide-for-applicants/>

Budget

You will need to submit a balanced budget that includes any other sources of public or private income, in-kind support and details of your project expenditure.

Income column should:

- include all funds and resources required to support your project.
- list the grant requested from Council in the income column.
- Provide details of all other income for the project including from other grant programs, fundraising, donations, participant fees, in kind support etc.

Expenditure column should include all costs associated with the project including any goods or services required and any in kind support that is contributing to the project.

Please remember the budget must balance, Income must equal expenditure.

Income

In the notes section, please indicate:

- Whether income is confirmed by writing **(C)** or not confirmed **(NC)** in the notes column.
- If you have applied for a non Banyule grant that is unconfirmed, please also write the date of when you expect to be notified of the outcome of the application. (month/year)
- If the support is In Kind (eg. volunteer hours, free use of venue etc.) please write **(IK)** in the notes column. In Kind support should be calculated as a quoted or estimated \$ figure.

Expenditure

In the notes section:

- If you have multiple grants streams, please identify which items you would use Banyule Council's grant for by writing (Banyule Grant) in the notes column
- If the item is covered by In Kind support, please write (IK) in the notes column

Example budget:

Income	\$	Notes	Expenditure	\$	Notes	Quote or notification of additional grant/funds attached - Yes or No
Banyule Environment Grant *Required	\$10,000.00 *Required	(NC)	Indigenous plants (45 flowering plants, 15 shrubs, 10 trees)	\$600	Banyule Grant	Yes
State Government Grant	\$3,500	(NC) Notification expected 10/2026	Site preparation and weed removal contractor	\$1,500	Banyule Grant	Yes
Volunteer Hours	\$3,300	(IK)	Mulch and soil	\$1,200	Banyule Grant	NA
			Garden tools (spades, gloves, wheelbarrow, watering cans)	\$600	Banyule Grant	Yes
			Educational signage and interpretive materials	\$600	Banyule Grant	Yes
			Workshop facilitator for Community Workshops	\$1,800	Banyule Grant	Yes
			Expert ecological consultation and site guidance	\$3,000	Banyule Grant	Yes
			Promotional materials	\$700	Banyule Grant	Yes
			Irrigation system and installation	\$3,500	State Government Grant	Yes
			Volunteer refreshments	\$300	(IK)	N/A
			Volunteer labour (Estimated 57.5 volunteer hours at \$52.19/hour)	\$3,000	(IK)	N/A
Total Income Amount			Total Expenditure Amount		Income - Expenditure	
\$16,800			\$16,800		\$0.00	

Quotes

- All applications are required to supply 1 quote/estimate for any hire/purchase of equipment, services or materials over \$500.
- Quotes can be:
 - Written
 - Scanned images from catalogues or online stores
 - Screenshots from a website showing the cost of an item.
 - Screenshots of an online shopping cart showing multiple items and the total cost.
- Estimates of costing can be provided where a quote is not possible.
- All quotes need to clearly show the supplier/ company name and contact details.
- All quotes need to be itemised and clearly show details of the cost of each individual item.
- Quotes should be current (not more than 6 months old).
- Council recommends that any equipment purchased with grant funds should meet Australian Standards.
- Council encourages applicants to purchase from a local supplier where practicable
- Capital works projects proposed for council owned land/buildings where a building permit is required, must be carried out by a commercial builder in line with public access building requirements. In this case, quotes must be from a commercially registered builder.

GST and Council Grants

Please note - Banyule City Council grants are GST free.

The GST component of products and services for your project can be included within the proposed grant budget, however GST will not be added to the total final grant amount allocated if you are successful.

For example, if you request \$1650 for a laptop (inclusive of \$150 GST), the grant amount paid will be \$1650. It will not be subject to a further 10% GST.

Financial information for Applicant

- A current profit and loss statement, an audited financial statement, or the financial statement presented at your AGM must be provided with the application.
- Bank statements should not be submitted as they may contain personal information.
- If the applicant has substantial funds in their operating account or has savings or term deposits, an explanation as to what the funds are set aside for should be provided. If this information is not provided, the application will be considered a lower priority than those applicants with limited finances.
- The application should demonstrate why the project cannot be completed with existing funds.
- Applicants need to demonstrate that they are in a sound financial position. Groups operating with a deficit are not eligible for funding.

Contact with a Council Officer

All applicants must contact a Council officer to discuss their proposal prior to submission. Council officers may be able to assist with developing your idea, helping you to plan your project or activity or advising you on eligibility conditions for the grants

Please follow the following timeline for contact:

- Initial contact no later than Friday 14 August 2026.
- An Officer will need to complete a final checklist with you, which covers questions related to project eligibility and viability prior to submission. This must be completed no later than Friday 21 August 2026.

Failure to discuss your project and complete a checklist with a Council officer prior to submission will render your application ineligible for funding.

To discuss your application, please contact Gemma Watson by:

- Calling 9457 9831
- Emailing environmentgrants@banyule.vic.gov.au

Auspicings

Unincorporated groups will require the support of an incorporated entity to auspice their grant application.

Any legally constituted body may act as an auspice organisation to partner with and/or apply for or manage funding on

behalf of another non-incorporated organisation.

Examples of an auspice include:

- A peak body or governing association of your field
- A community organisation you have previously worked or partnered with
- Organisations with a similar mission or purpose
- Local Neighbourhood Houses

If the application is successful, the auspice organisation will receive and manage the funds for the applicant to deliver the funded project. The auspice organisation is responsible for the effective acquittal of the grant.

If your application is to be auspicings by another organisation, all insurance, incorporation and ABN information of the auspicings group must be provided in your application. A letter from the auspice organisation on letterhead stating their support for the application is also required.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that a clear agreement setting out each party's obligations is reached

prior to applying for funding. Refer to <https://www.nfplaw.org.au/free-resources/working-with-others/what-isauspicings> for further information.

**Auspice organisations may also apply for funding. Acting as an auspice for an unincorporated group will not affect the eligibility for the groups own grant application*

Assessment and decision making

Assessment Criteria

Your application will be assessed against the following four criteria:

Key Criteria	What we look for when assessing a grant application	Score
Alignment with 'Our Sustainable Environment' Vision	<p>The application must demonstrate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How the project contributes to one or more elements of the Our Sustainable Environment vision.• The extent to which the project aligns with Banyule's environmental priorities. <p>Projects may contribute to one or more of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Caring for Country• Climate Action - Climate mitigation and/ or adaptation• Waste Reduction & Circular Economy• Environmental Education• Biodiversity• Urban Food• Urban Greening• Renewable Energy <p>Please note: Applicants may also wish to consider how their project contributes to the Healthy Planet, Healthy People priority within the Health and Wellbeing Plan. This is optional and is not separately assessed. However, it can be useful for Council to</p>	25

	<p>understand how projects address the links between the environment and health, helping us better serve the community and support holistic approaches.</p>	
<p>Community and Environmental Benefit</p>	<p>Your application should clearly demonstrate the community and environmental value of your project by addressing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly describe the environmental and/or community issue, need or opportunity your project is responding to. • Outline the environmental and community outcomes your project hopes to achieve, including how the environment, participants and broader community will benefit. • Identify who the intended beneficiaries or participants are and indicate approximately how many Banyule residents will benefit from the project. • Describe any lasting environmental, educational, social or stewardship benefits beyond the grant period. • Explain how the project will encourage environmental stewardship, community participation or build capacity for ongoing environmental action. • Explain how you will ensure the project is inclusive and accessible to all who wish to participate. 	<p>35</p>
<p>Well Planned Project</p>	<p>The application should demonstrate the following by providing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear description of the project. • A realistic and achievable project plan, including timelines, resources and personnel. • Information on the group's ability to deliver the project within the timeframes, including the required capacity, experience and skills. • Information on how the project will be managed. • Information on existing networks, partnerships and/or resources that will support the delivery and success of the project. • Demonstration that any necessary approvals, permits or land manager permissions have been obtained or considered. 	<p>30</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For planting projects, consideration of site preparation, species selection, ongoing maintenance and long-term plant survival. • Demonstration that any significant risks to project delivery have been identified and appropriately managed. 	
<p>Budget and Value for Money</p>	<p>The application must demonstrate the following by providing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective use of grant funds to achieve the project's objectives and outcomes. • A clear, balanced budget that shows total income equals total expenditure. The budget must describe the total cost of the project and identify any additional funding sources, contributions and in-kind support. • Suitable supporting evidence in the form of quotes or detailed costings for all expenditure items. • Accurate and reasonable costings that demonstrate the amount requested is appropriate and will support successful project delivery. • Where the project is reliant on funding from other sources, details of the funding sought and how this may impact project delivery if not secured. 	<p>10</p>
		<p>Total 100</p>

Decision making

Council has a conflict of interest declaration which all parties involved in the assessment process must complete to ensure any interests are declared prior to the assessment of grants commencing.

There are 3 stages in the assessment process:

Stage	Who
Eligibility check	Community Environmental Engagement Officer
Assessments and Recommendations	Once your application is deemed eligible, the assessment panel (made up of two members from BECAAC and Banyule Council Senior Officers) will review your application and assess it against the assessment criteria outlined above. Where relevant, the assessment panel may seek specialist comments from Council officers with expertise in a relevant field. The assessment panel will then make funding recommendations based on the merit of the application.
Allocations	City Development Management will review the assessment panel recommendations and make the final decision on whether to approve funding.

Approval of applications is based on scoring against the assessment criteria below:

- Alignment with 'Our Sustainable Environment' Vision
- Community and Environmental Benefit
- Well Planned Project
- Budget and Value for Money

Eligible applications will be independently assessed and scored against the assessment criteria by members of the assessment panel. Each application will receive a score out of 100.

Notification

Notification of grant outcomes will be made within 3 months of the closing date for the grant round. Applicants will be notified by email.

Successful applicants will be required to submit a Grant Agreement and Invoice form online prior to the grant been paid. Council no longer requires a separate invoice to be submitted by the successful applicant.

Successful applicants are expected to be represented at Council's Grants Presentation event on the evening of Wednesday 25 November 2026.

A list of successful applicants will be published on Council's website.

If you are successful

Successful grant applicants will be required to:

- use the funds for the purposes outlined in the grant application and/or as detailed in the letter of offer advising the success of the application.
- submit a Grant agreement and Invoice form online prior to the grant being paid by Council. The signing of this agreement confirms that the organisation is fully informed of the application and agrees to the grant conditions.
- attend Council's Grants Presentation event on Wednesday 25 November 2026
- apply for variations to the original purpose, scope or spend of the grant by lodging a variation request online via SmartyGrants. These requests are subject to Council approval
- complete a grant acquittal following the project, including a report on outcomes and impact, and provide itemised receipts for expenditure in line with the approved budget
- acknowledge Banyule City Council's support, including in promotional materials and through opportunities for Council engagement and visibility at events
- be published on council's website
- return any unexpended grant funds to Council if a project is discontinued or the grant funds are no longer required.
- comply with all statutory legal and insurance obligations.

Comprehensive information about these requirements will be provided to successful applicants in their grant agreement.

Who to Contact

For more information about the Environment Grants round please contact:

- Gemma Watson on 9457 9831 or gemma.watson@banyule.vic.gov.au

If you experience technical issues with the SmartyGrants system, please contact them directly at

service@smartygrants.com.au or by phone on **(03) 9320 6888**.

APPENDIX 1 – Definitions

ABN (Australian Business Number): The Australian Business Number is a number used to identify a business or organisation for tax and Australian Government purposes. An ABN for the organisation or for the Auspice organisation must be provided in the grant application.

Acquittal report: An acquittal report ensures that grant recipients have administered grant funds responsibly and in line with the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement. An acquittal report usually consists of a written report that summarises project outcomes in relation to project objectives. Grant recipients will be required to provide a financial statement detailing how the funds were spent. The financial statement must include a detailed budget breakdown.

Auspice: Any legally constituted body may act as an auspice organisation to partner with and/or apply for or manage funding on behalf of another non-incorporated organisation. If the funding application is successful, the auspice organisation will receive and manage the funds for the applicant to deliver the funded project or activities. The auspice organisation is responsible for the effective acquittal of the grant.

Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest occurs if a member of the Assessment Panel has something to personally gain from the grant application being either successful or unsuccessful. It also extends to providing family and close friends with preference.

Grant agreement: A Grant Agreement is a formal document stating the purpose of the funding, the financial amount, and the conditions attached to the grant. It also defines the rights and responsibilities of the grant recipient and Council. Once signed, recipients are under a legal obligation to comply with the stated terms and conditions.

In-kind support: An in-kind contribution is when a group contributes goods or services in lieu of providing funds. In kind contributions must have a \$ value. For example, volunteer hours @ \$41 per hour, use of equipment or facilities or donated goods.

Incorporated associations: An incorporated association receives recognition as a legal entity separate from its members and offers some protection for office holders from any debts or liabilities incurred by the group. The organisation must be registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria. For more information, please contact Consumer Affairs Victoria or phone 1300 558 18.

Social Enterprise or Profit for Purpose: An organisation that trades to intentionally tackle social problems, improve communities, provide people at risk of exclusion access to employment or training or help the environment.

Public Liability Insurance: protects community groups and organisations against legal liability to pay compensation to third parties, property damage that may occur as a result of activities undertaken by the group or legal costs that a group may have to pay if it needs to defend claims of bodily injury and/or property damage made by a member of the public against it.

Unincorporated associations: An unincorporated association is not recognised as a separate legal entity to the members associated with it. It is a group of people who agree to act together as an organisation and form an association. The group can remain informal, and its members make their own rules on how the group is managed. The rules may also be referred to as a constitution.

Not for Profit (NFP): An NFP is an organisation that does not distribute any profit to an individual, its members and or shareholders. Any profit from the organisation will be directed back into the organisation and its activities

Appendix 3 - Grants Tip Sheet: Social Connection with purpose

Environmental projects can do more than improve the natural environment. They can also create opportunities for people to connect, build relationships, learn new skills and contribute to something meaningful in their local area.

Social isolation and loneliness are increasing across many communities. Environmental projects such as community planting days, citizen science projects, repair cafés, community gardens and climate action initiatives can help strengthen social connections while also delivering environmental outcomes.

Banyule is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all residents. To improve health and wellbeing, Banyule communities told us they want more inclusive, accessible, culturally safe, affordable and welcoming opportunities to connect - both socially and purposefully. Strong social connections improve health by building trust, support and cooperation, which are key factors in mental wellbeing.

We're including the following information for applicants whose project seeks to increase community connection alongside its environmental focus. You can read more about Banyule's Health and Wellbeing Plan at banyule.vic.gov.au/mhwbp.

What prevents people from connecting socially

We asked our Age Friendly, Multicultural, LGBTIQ+ and Disability Champions to help identify what is needed. The Champions discussed a range of common obstacles to social connection, including:

- Cost and affordability
- Transport and parking, especially for people with disabilities or in areas hard to reach (e.g., Greensborough)
- Mobility and sensory limitations
- Post COVID anxiety and difficulty reconnecting
- Lack of clarity about what support is available
- Limited seating, accessible bathrooms, and inclusive facilities
- Crowds and noisy environments
- Timing of events not suiting different groups.

These barriers highlight that connection is not just about programs—it's about reducing practical, emotional, and environmental obstacles.

Where people feel comfortable to socially connect

All Champions groups discussed feeling comfortable in outdoor and community spaces with a neighbourhood feel, where connection can happen naturally, including:

- Parks and reserves
- Shopping strips with seating and greenery
- Community halls and indoor spaces
- Playgrounds with seating for older people

- Public spaces that are safe at all times of day (lighting, access)

What supports social connections

Inclusion is considered the foundation of any successful social connection initiative. In simple terms, this means:

- Activities should feel welcoming, respectful and open to everyone.
- People should know in advance what support is available, such as interpreters, quieter spaces or accessibility features.
- Spaces should feel safe and comfortable for people of all ages, cultures, abilities, genders and backgrounds.
- Activities should be easy to join, low cost, and not require a big commitment.
- There should be different ways to take part, including quiet, small-group and identity-safe options.
- Venues should include accessible seating, bathrooms and changerooms.

Cultural activities can help people feel like they belong and be themselves.

The Champions said it is important to have:

- Social groups that welcome people from different cultures and LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Clear signs that show a place is inclusive and safe, such as welcoming signage, safe practices and trained staff that can stand up against racism, support others, and be good allies.

What supports social connections

Common ideas:

- Walking or cycling groups
- Community workshops
- Cultural exchange activities (recipes, storytelling, festivals)
- Intergenerational connections
- Quiet or low sensory sessions
- Online / hybrid meetups for accessibility

What supports social connections

We're here to help you with useful inclusion information and specialist inclusion advice.

Reach out to the Community Impact Team impact@banyule.vic.gov.au with your questions and ask for a copy of the Banyule Inclusive Event Guide.